



Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.eu.int>)

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INTRODUCTION

Europe is characterised by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) regularly update a set of national monographs entitled *Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary). Also included are descriptions of initial vocational education and training in alternance and adult education and training within provision for lifelong learning. The initial and in-service training of teachers and their status are also considered.

The information is set out in accordance with a common structure to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasised.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardised so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational provision entirely within schools). The way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational education and training in alternance is the subject of a chapter in its own right. It includes all education and training for young people that is not essentially school-based, and thus covers for example apprenticeships based on the 'dual system' pattern, sandwich course training and any other initiatives and experiments with major elements of 'on-the-job' experience.

This is followed by a chapter on tertiary education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, tuition fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment. The chapter includes any initiatives implemented as part of the Bologna process.

The last chapter deals with continuing education and training for adults (whether in or outside the labour market, employed or unemployed). It provides information on the political, legislative and financial framework of this kind of education, on the authorities concerned and their responsibilities, as well as on the general organisation of training for adults (types of institution, access requirements, programme objectives, the curriculum and quality assurance). There is also a brief description of guidance/counselling services, as well as of questions relating to assessment and accreditation including the recognition of non-formal kinds of learning.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are national statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialisation.

The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational education and training in alternance, and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the CEDEFOP REFER Network (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the case of the 12 candidate countries. We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, and the ETF in Turin for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Given the number of countries now covered ⁽¹⁾ and the amount of data available, the description of each system of education and training may be consulted solely electronically on the website of the EURYDICE Network (<http://www.eurydice.org>), which brings it to the attention of the largest possible number of people and enables it to be updated on a more regular basis.

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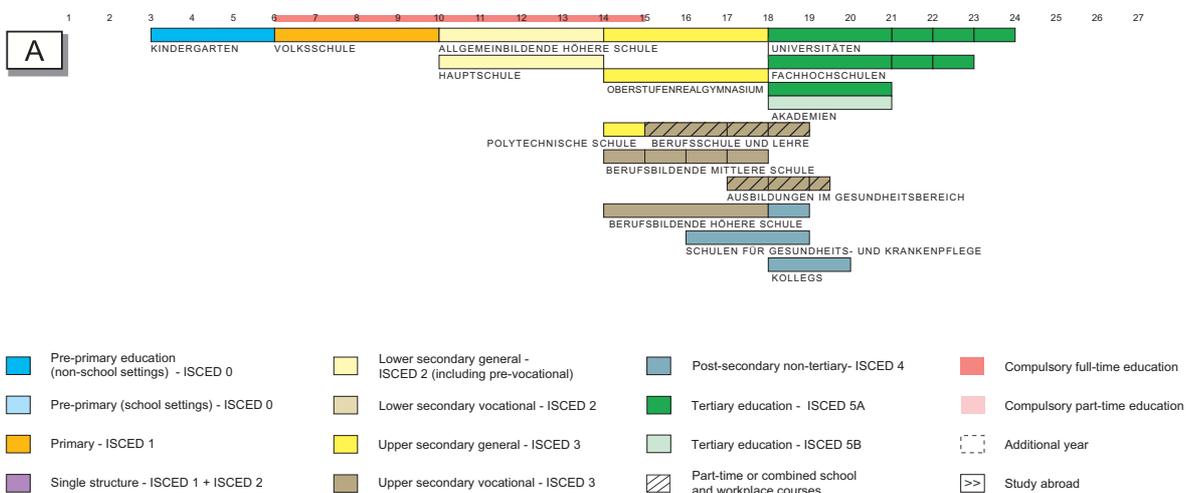
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⁽¹⁾ The 30 European countries taking part in the EU Education Programme, Socrates.

Organisation of the education system in Austria, 2003/04



Source: Eurydice.

Note: *Berufsbildende Höhere Schule* is a 5-year school.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Background

Austria is a federal State with a total area of 83,858 square kilometres, consisting of nine provinces (*Länder*). When the 2001 census was taken, Austria's population was 8,032,926 of which 1,550,123 lived in Vienna, the capital. 67% of the population lived in urban areas.

A monarchy up until 1918, Austria is now a parliamentary democracy with a Constitution, established in the period between 1920 and 1929, based on republican, democratic, federal and legal principles, as well as the principle of the separation of powers.

The Federal President is the supreme representative of the State, elected directly by the people for a six-year term. The National and Federal Chambers are the legislative bodies of the Republic, the National Chamber (*Nationalrat*) being the most important. The members of the Federal Chamber (*Bundesrat*) are appointed by the parliaments of the nine *Länder*. The Federal Government is formed by the Federal Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Ministers. The *Land* parliaments serve as the legislative bodies at *Länder* level. The provincial administration is headed by state provincial government offices (*Ämter der Landesregierungen*).

The municipalities enjoy a constitutionally guaranteed right to self-administration, although they are subject to the administrative control of the *Land*. They have an elected municipal council led by the mayor, who is elected either by the municipal council or, depending on the legislation of the *Land*, by popular vote.

In Austria there is an organizational and institutional division between Church and State. Religion is taught at schools; dispensation from instruction is possible. The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism.

The official language is German. The legal system guarantees the rights of local ethnic groups (Slovenians, Croats, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Roma and Sintij). This guarantee also covers their education.

In 2002, the gross domestic product of Austria was shared among the different employment sectors as follows: primary sector 2.2%, secondary sector 30.6%, tertiary sector 67.2%. The level of unemployment was 4.0% (2002).

1.2 Basis of the school system: principles and legislation

According to the School Organization Act of 25 July 1962 'it shall be the task of the Austrian school to foster the development of the talents and potential abilities of young persons in accordance with ethical, religious and social values and the appreciation of that which is true, good and beautiful, by giving them an education corresponding to their respective courses of studies. It shall give young people the knowledge and skills required for their future lives and occupations and train them to acquire knowledge on their own initiative'.

The Austrian legal system guarantees general access to public schools without distinction of birth, gender, race, status, class, language or religion. Private sector schools, in contrast, may select pupils according to these criteria, although such selection is rarely applied.

1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organization and administration of the education and training system

In Austria, education has always been a most sensitive area, heavily disputed among political decision-makers. This explains the casuistic distribution of responsibilities between different bodies and entities. The existing legal framework therefore renders attempts at amending education laws very difficult.

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur*) has overall responsibility for primary and secondary education, including general education and vocational schools. The work experience part of initial vocational training is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economic Affairs.

In 2000 a reorganization at the central level combined the responsibilities for schools and universities by setting up the Ministry of Education, Science and Arts.

As is the case with government administration in general, responsibilities for legislation and implementation in school education are divided between the Federation and the *Länder*. This division is made as follows:

- **The Federation has exclusive responsibility for legislation and implementation** with regard to the entire field of general secondary schooling, intermediate and upper technical and vocational education and training for kindergarten teaching and non-teaching staff, and with regard to the conditions of service and staff representation rights of teachers at these schools.
- **The Federation is responsible for legislation, and the individual *Länder* are responsible for implementation** with regard to the conditions of service and staff representation rights of teachers at public sector schools of compulsory education.
- **The Federation is responsible for basic legislation, and the *Länder* are responsible for issuing and implementing laws** with regard to the organizational structure of federal education authorities in the *Länder* and the external organization of public sector schools of compulsory education. External organization includes the development, construction, maintenance and approval of schools, but also the establishment of pupil numbers per class and teaching periods. All basic legislation has a framework character and is expressed through implementing laws promulgated by the *Landtage*, the legislative bodies at *Länder* level.
- **The *Länder* are responsible for legislation and implementation** as, for example, with regard to nursery schools (*Kindergarten*).

School authorities at federal level

Separate federal bodies have been established wherever the Federation is responsible for implementation. These are:

- **District School Boards** at the level of political 'districts';
- **Provincial School Boards** at the level of the *Länder*; and
- the **Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture** for the entire territory.

The District and Provincial School Boards are the federal school authorities in the *Länder*. The Austrian system of administration is characterised by a two-tier hierarchy. Provincial School Boards have designated jurisdiction in matters referred to a District School Board, while the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and

Culture (BMBWK) deals with cases referred to Provincial School Boards in the first instance.

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK)

In general, the Federal Government introduces draft laws, known as government bills, in the National Council. The draft produced by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture will first have been submitted to a number of relevant authorities (Collegiate Councils in the District and Provincial School Boards, provincial governments, various interest groups, the churches, etc.) for an expert opinion. Basic laws enacted by the Federation will normally prescribe a deadline by which the *Länder* must issue pertinent implementing laws (six months to one year). Implementing laws are passed by the *Landtag*. More detailed provisions are contained in the individual constitutions of the *Länder*.

The federal minister for education, science and culture promulgates curricula on the basis of the School Organization Act. The spadework for curricular development is entrusted to working groups of teachers set up to cover most subjects. All curricula provide for areas of school autonomy, which schools can but are not required to use. As part of the school book scheme, pupils are provided with the material they need for class free of charge in return for a small individual contribution (mainly textbooks, but also therapeutic learning aids and learning aids selected by the pupils themselves).

Within the framework of a booklist approved by the Ministry, teaching aids are selected by Teachers' Conferences (for the upper level of secondary education) or by school forums (all other schools) with the cooperation of representatives of parents and pupils. Although textbooks not featured on the list can be selected, they will not be made available free of charge.

Provincial School Boards

Provincial School Boards are directed by the Provincial Governor (as chairman of the Provincial School Board); for all practical purposes he/she is assisted in the fulfilment of his/her duties by an Executive Chairman. The central body within a Provincial School Board is the Collegiate Council, made up of voting members (including teachers and also pupils' parents) and members with consultative status (representatives of legally recognised churches, religious communities and interest groups, school inspectors). Voting members are represented on the Collegiate Council in accordance with the balance of power held by the political parties in the provincial parliament.

It is one of the major tasks of the provincial school board's Collegiate Council to submit three proposals for the appointment of teachers and head teachers at intermediate and upper secondary schools. The Federal Minister selects one of three candidates suggested as head teacher, who will then be appointed by the Federal President. Collegiate Councils also issue general directives on existing laws and ordinances (e.g. curricula) and submit expert opinions on draft laws and regulations.

District School Boards

District School Boards are headed by the District Governor. The Collegiate Councils at district level are structured and set up on the same basis as those at provincial level.

The Collegiate Council at district level issues general directives and submits expert opinions on draft laws and regulations, for example with regard to curricula.

Offices of the Provincial Government

The implementation of matters falling under the responsibility of the individual *Länder* is carried out by executive authorities at provincial level – the so-called Offices of the Provincial Government (*Amt der Landesregierung*).

Their most important task is the maintenance of public sector schools of general compulsory education and the appointment of teachers and head teachers at these schools. However, the District and Provincial School Boards have to be consulted on all such matters.

School autonomy

Since the school year 1993/94, the 14th amendment to the School Organization Act has empowered the respective school partnership body (School Committee comprising teachers', pupils' and parents' representatives or School Forum in compulsory schools in which only teachers' and parents' representatives are involved) to issue its own curricular regulations autonomously by a two-thirds vote. This means that main focal points may be chosen within a given framework and schools can develop their own profile.

Provisions governing school autonomy at pre-vocational schools enable a flexible response to the vocational interests of pupils and the respective demands of the particular region.

Intermediate and upper secondary technical and vocational schools offer pupils the possibility of choosing between different study courses. Within certain limits, schools can also determine the pupil numbers required for creating new classes and dividing existing ones.

A 1995 provision on the organization of school time gives schools the possibility of declaring five school-free days per school year for important school or public events. By virtue of having time available to allocate as they see fit, schools are given the opportunity to organise their internal in-service training programme in a more flexible way.

The legal basis was established for extending the financial autonomy of schools in 1996. Under certain provisions laid down by law, schools can rent out school rooms or parts of school property (e.g. their gymnasium or sports grounds) to third parties and choose how the income they receive is allocated, as long as it is used for school purposes. The same applies to external funding received from sponsoring or commercial activities at school. Moreover since 1998, so-called quasi-legal bodies can be established at Federation schools, which have the power to conclude legal business as determined by law.

All Austrian schools can, in a limited way, control the funds allocated to them by the school authorities. For intermediate and upper secondary technical and vocational colleges this can serve the procurement of computers and technical equipment (financial autonomy). This makes occupation-oriented, project-based forms of education (e.g. 'company practice') easier to implement.

1.4 Inspection/supervision/guidance

Austria's education system is characterised by a long tradition of school inspection. Federal school authorities in the *Länder* are responsible for primary and secondary education (District School Councils, Provincial School Councils). At *Länder* level, school inspection is carried out by provincial school inspectors who are responsible for a specific school type. At compulsory school level, provincial school inspectors are assisted by district school inspectors, and in intermediate and upper secondary education by subject inspectors.

There are a few schools (e.g. the upper secondary schools in the fields of agriculture and forestry, one intermediate school in the field of forestry, a number of upper secondary vocational schools in Vienna, etc.) which come directly under the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

1.5 Financing

Schools of compulsory education (primary schools, general secondary schools, special schools, pre-vocational schools and vocational schools) are maintained by the *Länder*, municipalities or municipal associations.

While most of the schools in general compulsory education are maintained by municipalities or municipal associations, part-time compulsory vocational schools are maintained by the *Länder*.

Maintaining and operating a school includes the establishment, maintenance and repair of the school buildings, payment of overheads, purchase of equipment and teaching aids, provisions for the school doctor, and the employment of the necessary auxiliary staff (caretakers, maintenance staff, etc.). The employment of teachers at compulsory schools is exclusively the responsibility of the *Länder*. Teachers in public sector schools of compulsory education are employed by the *Länder*, which pay the cost of their salaries. However, the *Länder* are fully compensated for this cost by the Federation in the process of fiscal adjustment. (The sole exception being teachers at compulsory vocational schools, where this refund is granted only up to 50%.)

Public sector schools of compulsory education are not allowed to charge tuition fees. Transport to and from school using public transport facilities is free. Textbooks are provided to pupils free of charge, and they are entitled to keep them. In recent years, a contribution of 10% from the pupils has been introduced both for transport to and from school and for textbooks.

Intermediate and upper secondary schools are established and maintained by the Federation, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries. Teachers do not enter into an employment contract with the school in this case either, but with the Federation. The same is true for intermediate and upper secondary schools with respect to the absence of tuition fees, free transport and textbooks as for compulsory education.

Austrian schools have relatively few funds of their own to administer. Reforms are under way to increase their financial autonomy.

All Universities and Art Colleges (with few exceptions) were established by the State and are predominately financed out of the state budget.

On 1 January 2004, universities will obtain full legal status and therefore be responsible for

their own budget, most of which will be provided by the State.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The following advisory bodies have been set up and attached to the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, mainly to advise the Federal Minister:

- The School Reform Commission (*Schulreformkommission*) is composed of members delegated by the political parties represented in the National Council, the Provincial School Boards, and interest groups, as well as university professors of education.
- The Centre for Educational Development (*Zentrum für Schulentwicklung*) consists of different departments. Each department specialises in a particular area. Department I is concerned among other things with the supervision of school experimentation projects; Department II concentrates on evaluation and educational research; and Department III concentrates on basic principles and concepts for modern language teaching.
- The Parents' Advisory Board (*Elternbeirat*) comprises representatives of the main associations of parents and related organizations. It usually meets several times in the course of a school year under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture or an official appointed by him.
- The Federal Pupils' Advisory Board (*Bundesschülervertretung*) brings together pupils' representatives and representatives of youth organizations. It usually meets four times in the course of a school year under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture or an official appointed by him.

Educational and careers guidance

Approximately 2,500 school guidance counsellors and educational consultants provide counselling services at all Austrian schools (with the exception of primary schools). Full-time teachers are partially released from their normal activities to provide counselling. Guidance counsellors receive on-going training on the basis of a common curriculum.

Their work focuses on providing:

- information on the educational options offered at their particular school;

- information on educational options offered by the education system as a whole;
- individual guidance on decisions about training and career choices as well as on difficulties and concerns to do with school.

Pupils and guidance counsellors also work together closely with the institutions of the Labour Exchange. These counsellors are also available for presentations at parents' evenings and one-to-one counselling during consultation hours.

1.7 Private schools

The Austrian Constitution lays down the right to establish private schools. Most private schools are run by the churches or special interest groups (chambers). There are two basic types of

private schools: those that teach the official curriculum and those that have their own curriculum.

The amount of support given to private schools depends in large part on who runs them. Those run by an officially recognised church can claim to have their teaching staff paid by the State. These teachers remain federal employees (at intermediate and upper secondary schools) or provincial employees (in compulsory education). Private schools that are not run by an officially recognised church cannot claim to have their teaching staff paid by the State. On the basis of a private contract, these schools may be treated in the same way as those run by an officially recognised church.

All private schools may apply to the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for a subsidy for extraordinary expenses on the basis of a private contract, for example, for building costs.

2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION (*Vorschulerziehung*)

Nursery school (*Kindergarten*) is the traditional form of pre-primary education for children aged three to six in Austria. However, it does not form part of the education system. Nursery school is optional and children attend at their parents' initiative.

Ninety percent of all five-year-old children in Austria currently attend nursery schools (in 1960/61 the corresponding figure was only 23.5%). There are striking regional differences in the degree of nursery school provision.

2.1 Organization

Anyone wishing to open a nursery school has to comply with a number of conditions to ensure that the educational mandate of the nursery school is observed. There are public kindergartens (established and maintained by the Federation, the *Länder* or the municipalities) and private kindergartens. Some of the private kindergartens are administered by educators and parents as autonomous groups. The majority of kindergartens have been set up by the municipalities (almost 75%).

Staff and operational costs are generally borne by the administering body. The contributions made by the *Länder* to the cost of the establishment and operation of a kindergarten vary considerably; this is true for private kindergartens in particular.

Private kindergartens that are run by associations, churches or religious orders receive grants towards meeting the cost of staff and overheads on certain conditions, either on a discretionary basis, or according to a fixed percentage rate in accordance with the applicable Nursery School Act. Private kindergartens run by other bodies than the above-mentioned generally do not receive any financial support.

Some kindergartens do not charge any fees at all, while many municipalities charge a kindergarten attendance fee according to a graded scheme adjusted to net family income. Private kindergartens similarly charge varying amounts.

Kindergartens are either full day or half day. Half-day kindergartens are open from at least

7 a.m. to 12 a.m., with the possibility of lunch. Full-day kindergartens are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and include lunch. Parents may pick up their children whenever they want. Many kindergartens are open throughout the year.

2.2 Curriculum/assessment

Nursery education focuses on developing the child's personality as a whole and is not primarily concerned with preparing children for school.

To achieve this objective, kindergartens are run in small, generally coeducational, groups (either age groups or so called 'family groups' – 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds mixed together) taking individual styles and approaches into account and systematically providing different games and materials. First and foremost, a child at nursery school should have the chance of gaining experiences through appropriate play activities without the pressure of time or achievement.

2.3 Teachers

Kindergarten teachers are either trained in special schools at upper secondary level or in special training colleges at post-secondary level. The latter provide a two-year teacher training course that is also open to individuals who may not have passed a school-leaving examination but have worked in related occupational fields. The latter have to pass a special entrance examination or vocational school-leaving examination. These colleges constitute a major reform in the kindergarten sector.

2.4 Statistics

Children aged three to five in public kindergartens	
Children	212,607
Staff	25,070
Kindergartens	4,663

Source: (ed.), Krippen, Kindergärten und Horte (Kindertagesheime), Berichtsjahr 2001/02, Beiträge zur Österreichischen Statistik, Vienna 2002.

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

3A Primary education (*Volksschule*)

The objective of *Volksschule* (*Grundschule* or primary school) is to provide a common basic education for all pupils. In this context, the social integration of handicapped children is to be taken into account.

Primary school should provide children with a basic, balanced education for their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

The lower level (*Grundstufe I*) includes years 1 and 2 and also the pre-primary level, if necessary. The upper level (*Grundstufe II*) consists of years 3 and 4. The pre-primary year (pre-school class), years 1 and 2 in the lower level can be offered separately or as a combined unit, covering all lower level years.

The pre-primary year is designed to foster the development of children of compulsory school age who are not yet mature enough to attend primary school proper. Unlike nursery school, the pre-primary year is part of the school system.

Compulsory schooling begins on 1 September following the child's sixth birthday.

All children of compulsory school age who are ready to attend school are accepted into the first year. It is up to the head teacher to decide whether the child will be able to follow the teaching in the first year without being subjected to excessive physical or mental demands or whether it would be more appropriate for the child to attend a pre-primary year. In keeping with the child's abilities or needs, he or she can take up to three years to master the learning skills taught at the lower level of primary school.

Children who only turn six between 1 September and 31 December of the current school year and who would not be over-challenged by the demands of the first year of school can be accepted early into the first year at the request of the parents or guardians. This early attendance of the first year is calculated as part of the duration of compulsory education. If it turns out that the child is out of his/her depth after being accepted early into the first school year, the early acceptance is revoked. In this case, the parents or guardians may register the

child for the pre-primary year. Such changes may be made up to the end of the current calendar year.

Since the 1999/2000 school year, to find a better match for the pupil's learning needs, it has been possible to transfer children in the lower level of primary school to the next highest or next lowest year even during the school year.

At primary school, a child may skip one school year. Year 1 may not be skipped. Pupils may only be accepted into the level one above the next level if the overall length of primary school education is no less than three years. If after the child has been accepted into the next-but-one year, it emerges that the child is being overchallenged, a decision may be taken before the end of the calendar year, with the approval of the parents or guardians, to move the child back down.

Since the 1998/99 school year, the primary school curriculum has stipulated that from Year 1, learning a modern language (English, French, Italian, Croatian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Czech or Hungarian) is compulsory (i.e. no grades are given) and that from the school year 2003/04 all primary schools must include this in their teaching plan from Year 1.

3A.1 Organization

Classes are coeducational. The maximum number of pupils per class is 30 (20 for a pre-primary class), and each primary school year corresponds to one class. If the number of pupils in each year is too small, several years may be combined in one class. Teachers are class teachers and spend the four years with the same class of children.

The pre-primary year can be run as a separate class or integrated into the lower level of primary school (first or second year plus any pre-primary year).

3A.2 Curriculum

The timetable for the pre-primary year comprises compulsory practical exercises in the following subjects, totalling 20 weekly lessons:

- religious instruction
- local history, geography, biology
- road safety
- language and oral expression, preparation for reading and writing
- early mathematics
- singing and music-making
- exercises in rhythm
- drawing
- crafts
- physical education
- playing.

From the 2003/04 school year, the timetable for primary school (Years 1 to 4) will leave the school with options for deciding the number of hours taught per week.

The total number of hours for Years 1 to 4 is 90.

Compulsory subjects	Years and number of weekly lessons			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2
Local history, geography, biology	3	3	3	3
German, reading, writing	7	7	7	7
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Music	1	1	1	1
Drawing	1	1	1	1
Technical and textiles	1	1	2	2
Physical education	3	3	2	2
Compulsory practical exercises				
Modern foreign language	x ²⁾	x ²⁾	1	1
Road safety	x ³⁾	x ³⁾	x ³⁾	x ³³⁾
Total number of weekly lessons ¹⁾	20-23	20-23	22-25	22-25

- 1) By allowing schools to make their own decisions on curricula within the given framework, the number of hours allotted to compulsory subjects (with the exception of

compulsory 'Religious Instruction') and mandatory 'Modern Language' teaching may be increased or decreased by one hour per week each, making a total of two hours per week, for each year group. Subjects taught to a year may not be dropped entirely.

- 2) Thirty-two hours a year which are to be taken into account from the total number of weekly hours set aside for the subjects in question. This will not alter the total number of hours per week.
- 3) Ten annual lessons which are to be taken into account from the total number of weekly hours set aside for the subjects in question. This will not alter the total number of hours per week.

If need be, one hour a week of remedial classes in languages and mathematics will be offered.

Children whose mother tongue is not German are integrated into the class and may receive remedial help in German, the language used in the classroom, or attend lessons in their mother tongue.

Compulsory subjects and compulsory practical exercises are taught to mixed-ability groups. Optional exercises may be chosen on a voluntary basis (singing in the choir, music and movement, physical education, drama, music-making, drawing, modern languages, special classes designed to boost pupils' interest and abilities, lessons in their mother tongue).

Teachers decide on the **teaching methods** and **materials** they use. However, the form and contents of the latter must comply with the curriculum for the particular year and be suited to children of that age.

3A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

General provisions

As far as assessment procedures, marking, the repetition of years and reports are concerned, a distinction has to be made between general provisions, applying to all schools, and specific regulations that refer to certain types of schools only.

As a general rule, performance assessment should be evenly spread over the school year.

Performance is determined by:

- assessing the active participation of pupils in class work;
- oral assessment;

- written assessment (class assignments, tests, dictations);
- practical assessment;
- graphic assessment (e.g. in subjects like descriptive geometry).

Teachers are responsible for all assessments; they generally assess individual skills and capabilities in individual subjects. Marks range from 1 to 5.

Compulsory and optional subjects are both graded. School reports are a summary of pupils' achievements. Schools issue reports (at the end of the first semester), annual reports (at the end of the year) and certificates (after successful completion of a particular type of school).

The annual report considers pupils' achievement during the entire year, but particular weight is given to the most recent assessment. Pupils are graded as follows: very good (1), good (2), satisfactory (3), sufficient (4), and insufficient (5).

As a general rule, pupils are entitled to enter the next year if they have been assessed in all compulsory subjects and never rated 'insufficient', although the law in fact provides for the possibility of teachers allowing pupils to progress to the next year with one 'insufficient' rating. Pupils whose performance is deemed 'insufficient' in no more than two compulsory subjects may also sit a test in these subjects at the beginning of the following school year (resit). If they fail, they have to repeat the year in question.

Specific provisions for primary schools

In the pre-primary class, no marks are given. The report simply contains a record of the child's participation.

The first two years of primary education constitute a single one cycle. This means that all first years are entitled to enter the second year regardless of their assessment in the annual report.

Primary school pupils are also entitled to proceed to the next level regardless of their grade in the compulsory subjects of Music, Drawing, Technical and Textiles, and Physical Education.

Oral exams are not permitted at primary school. In Year 4, pupils complete between four and six pieces of work in German and Mathematics.

Teachers establish with parents (in a class or school forum) whether a description of achievement will accompany the marks in the first and second years.

Pupils who are not entitled to pass to the next year may repeat the year they have failed. Examinations at primary school cannot be resat.

During Year 4, either towards the end of the first semester or at the beginning of the second, parents or guardians must be informed about the further educational possibilities for their child on the basis of that child's interests and past achievements.

3A.4 Teachers

Teachers for the pre-primary year and primary school and teachers in special schools are trained at tertiary level teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Akademien*).

Candidates for teacher training colleges must have passed their matriculation examination, or must have passed a special entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or vocational matriculation examination (*Berufsreifeprüfung*).

The training course lasts at least six semesters (three years) and is completed by a teaching qualification examination.

Prospective primary school teachers generally acquire the whole range of skills necessary for teaching subjects in primary school (except Religious Instruction) and pre-primary education.

Primary school teachers are provincial employees (i.e. civil servants) under either a private-law or a public-law contract (tenured service). Part-time employment is possible.

Teachers receive continuing training either through autonomous study or by attending training establishments. However, only 15 hours of such training per year are compulsory. In-service training activities can be attended either during the holidays, in the teacher's free time or during working hours.

3A.5 Statistics

Primary schools (including pre-primary years)	
Schools	3,360
Classes	19,387
Pupils	387,408
Teachers *)	33,184

*) The figures given for teachers are taken from 'headcounts' (as in all other tables).

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian Central Statistical Office (ed.), *Austrian School Statistics 2001/02*, Vienna 2002.

3B Secondary education: lower level

The first division into separately organised school types occurs at the lower level of secondary education, that is:

- General secondary school (*Hauptschule*);
- Academic secondary school – lower level; (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schule, AHS-Unterstufe*);
- Upper level of primary school (*Volksschuloberstufe*). Numerically speaking, this type is relatively insignificant.

About 30% of all primary school leavers in Austria attend academic secondary school, while about 70% go to general secondary school. The number going into the upper level of primary school is negligible.

Pupils must have successfully completed the fourth year of primary school to be admitted to general secondary school. In order to be admitted to an academic secondary school, they must have been rated 'very good' or 'good' in German, reading and mathematics. Pupils who do not meet these standards have to pass an admission test.

3B.1 General secondary school (*Hauptschule*)

General secondary school covers years 5 to 8 (10- to 14-year-olds), and provides general education in coeducational classes. In doing so, the principles of social integration are to be taken into account.

The *Hauptschule* prepares pupils for employment and for the transition to intermediate and upper secondary schools. The size of general secondary schools varies for regional and demographic reasons. They are often accommodated in the same building as – or one adjacent to – a primary school. They are maintained by a municipality or municipal association.

General secondary classes are organised as follows:

- Pupils are allocated to one of three ability groups in German, mathematics and the modern foreign language after an observation period (of at least two weeks). The educational requirements and aims in the top ability group correspond to those of

the academic secondary school. Within one ability group pupils generally have approximately the same level of ability; however, internal differentiation is possible.

- In all other subjects there is mixed ability teaching within established classes.
- Individual schools can establish special deadlines by which time pupils must have been transferred to the next higher or next lower ability group, but this is not required.
- Compulsory preparatory/remedial teaching is provided to pupils upgraded to a higher group or those facing downgrading.
- Pupils with good results in a general secondary school may transfer directly to an academic secondary school.

Curriculum and assessment/certification/guidance

The approved number of hours per subject at general secondary schools provides a framework for the schools' autonomous decisions. The established numbers apply where no such resolutions have been made.

Discretionary school timetable

Compulsory subjects	Years and weekly lessons				Total
	1 st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2	8
German					15-21
Modern foreign language					12-18
History and social studies					5-10
Geography and economics					7-12
Mathematics					14-20
Geometry					2-6
Biology and environmental education					7-12
Chemistry					1.5-4
Physics					5-10
Music					6-11
Drawing, writing					7-12
Elementary technical work ('technology' 1)					7-12
Textile work 1)					7-12
Nutrition and home economics					2-6
Physical education					12-18
Total weekly lessons	27-31	27-31	28-32	30-34	120

¹⁾ alternative compulsory subject

Vocational guidance is also provided as a compulsory practical exercise lasting one to four hours.

Schools are allowed some autonomy in making decisions on the curricula and may teach one hour less than the minimum number of weekly lessons in no more than five compulsory subjects if the following conditions are met:

- Suitable measures are in place to ensure that all cited core areas in individual subjects are covered; and
- a decent concept is in place for creating a profile that will foster pupils' interests, aptitude and motivation to learn.

The compulsory subjects of 'Mathematics' and 'Geometry' may be combined, provided that at least 15 hours of these subjects are taught each week.

Non-discretionary school timetable

Compulsory subjects	Years and weekly lessons				Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2	8
German	5	4	4	4	17
Modern foreign language	4	4	3	3	14
History and social studies	-	2	2	2	6
Geography and economics	2	1	2	2	7
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	16
Geometry	-	-	-	2	2
Biology and environmental education	2	2	1	2	7
Chemistry	-	-	-	2	2
Physics	-	1	2	2	5
Music	2	2	1	1	6
Drawing	2	2	2	1	7
Elementary technical work ('technology') 1)	2	1	2	2	7
Textile work 1)	2	1	2	2	7
Nutrition and home economics	-	1.5	1.5	-	3
Physical education	4	3	3	3	13
Total weekly lessons	29	29.5	29.5	32	120

1) alternative compulsory subject

Vocational guidance is also provided as a compulsory practical exercise.

There are also optional subjects and practical exercises. Nutrition and home economics and the alternative compulsory subjects 'technology' and 'textile work' must be taught in coeducational groups, if chosen by both girls and boys. In principle, general secondary schools teach English as a modern foreign language; some offer French or Italian.

Teachers are free to decide on the **teaching methods** and **materials** they use. However, the form and contents of the latter must comply with the curriculum for the particular year and be suited to children of that age. Both head teachers and school inspectors are entitled to issue directives to teachers on this matter.

The general rules for assessment procedures, marking and reports are the same as described under 'General Provisions' in the section on Assessment under *Volksschule*.

Pupils are generally allowed to move up to the next year if they have been assessed in all compulsory subjects and have not received a mark of 'insufficient' in their annual report. Special distinctions have to be made in the marking system, however.

Pupils who have successfully completed general secondary school may be admitted to a pre-vocational school (see 4A) or intermediate or upper secondary vocational school, (see 4C), or to an academic secondary school. At the end of the general secondary school, pupils receive a school-leaving certificate (*Hauptschulabschlusszeugnis*).

Pupils who have passed the required courses can move on to an academic or vocational secondary school without an admissions test. Pupils who have completed their compulsory education at the end of general secondary school may seek employment or take up apprenticeship training (see section 5).

Teachers

General secondary and pre-vocational school teachers, such as primary and special school teachers, follow tertiary level training at Teacher Training Colleges.

The training course lasts at least six semesters (three years) and ends with a teaching diploma examination.

Teachers for general secondary and pre-vocational schools are qualified in at least two subjects (subject teacher system). They teach their subjects in various classes and, provided that it is one of the ability group subjects, in various ability groups. In general secondary school, teachers often teach their subjects to the same class for all four years, although changes may be necessary for various reasons (e.g. maternity leave). From a pedagogical point of

view, continuity is recommended.

As regards employment and in-service training, the situation is the same as described in 3A.4.

Statistics

General secondary schools	
Pupils	265,781
Teachers	33,873
Schools	1,170
Pupil/teacher ratio	7.8
Pupil/class ratio	23.0

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian National Statistical Office (ed.), *Austrian School Statistics 2001/2002*, Vienna 2002.

3B.2 Academic secondary school – lower level (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule, AHS – Unterstufe*)

Academic secondary school comprises four years at the lower level (10- to 14-year-olds) and four years at the upper level (14- to 18-year-olds).

This chapter on the lower level of secondary education deals with the lower level of academic secondary school (AHS – *Unterstufe*).

The lower level of the two-level AHS is organised in coeducational classes according to age, and provides a comprehensive and in-depth general education. It has a dual function, since it both prepares pupils for the corresponding AHS upper level and also enables them to transfer to vocational schools.

The size of each AHS varies for regional and demographic reasons. The number of schools now makes it possible for children and young people from outlying areas to attend an AHS, as agreements with transport providers have achieved acceptable travel times. Pupils can also attend boarding schools.

The first two years of the lower level are uniformly organised, run according to a common curriculum and serve as a period of observation and orientation. The curriculum corresponds to that of general secondary schools. A modern foreign language is taught from the first year onwards.

In the third year a division into three types takes place:

- *Gymnasium* (including Latin);

- *Realgymnasium* (with geometry and an emphasis on mathematics and handicrafts); and
- *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium* (with an emphasis on chemistry and handicrafts).

There is no ability grouping.

Curriculum

The approved number of hours per subject at the lower level of academic secondary school are as follows (the differences in years three and four between the *Gymnasium* and the other two types are marked in brackets, first for the *Realgymnasium*, then for the *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*): It is also possible for schools to deviate from the timetable autonomously in the context of prescribed guidelines and to set priorities in terms of a profile suitable to the particular location.

Compulsory subjects	Years and weekly lessons			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2
German	4	4	4	4
Modern foreign language	4	4	4	3
Latin	-	-	4(-.)	3(-.)
History and social studies	-	2	2	2
Geography and economics	2	1	2(-.3)	2
Mathematics	4	4	3(4.3)	3(3.3)
Geometry	-	-	-(.7)	-(2.7)
Biology and environmental education	2	2	1,2,1	2
Chemistry	-	-	-(2.7)	2
Physics	-	1	2	2
Music	2	2	2	-(1.1)
Arts	2	2	2	2
Handicraft	2	2	-	-
Technology/Textile Work*)	-	-	-(2.2)	-(2.3)
Physical education	4	4	3	3
Total weekly lessons	28	30	29	30

*) alternative compulsory subject

There are also optional subjects and practical exercises.

Teachers are free to decide on the **teaching methods** and **materials** they use. However, the form and contents of the latter must comply with the curriculum for the particular year and be suited to children of that age. Both head teachers and school inspectors are entitled to issue directives to teachers on this matter.

Assessment/certification/guidance

The general rules for assessment procedures, marking and reports are the same as described under 'General Provisions' in section 3 Compulsory Education.

Pupils are generally allowed to move up to the next year, if assessed in all compulsory subjects and not rated 'insufficient' in the annual report. Pupils with an 'insufficient' rating in one or two compulsory subjects may sit a repeat examination at the beginning of the next school year and, provided they pass, may move on to the next year. (In some cases, referred to in the relevant law, it is possible to advance to the next year with **one** 'insufficient' rating). Pupils not entitled to move up to the next year may repeat the year they failed.

Teachers

Teachers at academic secondary schools are trained at universities or fine arts universities. Courses for qualifying as a teacher are defined as diploma studies. They last nine semesters (four-and-a-half years). Students must pass two diploma examinations and submit a diploma paper in order to graduate with an academic

degree (*Magister*). Studies include academic training in two subjects, pedagogical training in the last five semesters, and a *Schulpraktikum* comprising a four-week introductory phase and eight weeks of teaching practice.

The *Magister* diploma does not automatically entitle candidates to a permanent teaching post. Prior to being permanently employed, graduates have to successfully complete both a year of teaching in a school and additional courses (*Unterrichtspraktikum*).

Teachers at academic secondary schools are federal employees, under either a private-law contract or a public-law contract (tenured service). Part-time employment is possible.

As regards in-service teacher training, the situation is the same as described in 3A.4.

Statistics

Lower and upper level of academic secondary school	
Pupils	186,347
Teachers	19,668
Schools	325
Pupil/teacher ratio	9.5
Pupil/class ratio	24.3

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian National Statistical Office (ed.), *Austrian School Statistics 01/02*, Vienna 2002.

4. POST COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

At upper secondary level the differentiation in the school system becomes more marked due to the more clearly discernible interests and talents of pupils, as well as the requirements of society for different forms of vocational qualifications.

Besides academic secondary schools, years 9 to 13 (14- to 19-year-olds) are also provided in secondary technical and vocational schools.

The upper level of secondary education therefore comprises the following school types:

- pre-vocational school;
- upper level of academic secondary school (years 9 to 12);
- vocational school (years 10 to 13 maximum) – parallel to in-company vocational training ('dual system') (see Section 5);
- intermediate technical and vocational schools (years 9 to 12 maximum);
- higher technical and vocational schools (years 9 to 13);
- Kindergarten Teacher Training College (years 9 to 13);
- Training College for Non-Teaching Supervisory Staff (years 9 to 13).

Around 41% of general secondary school graduates chose a pre-vocational school or apprenticeship and part-time vocational school.

Approximately 6% of general secondary school graduates and 57% of lower level AHS graduates move up to the upper level of AHS.

53% of general secondary school graduates and 42% of lower level AHS graduates subsequently attend an intermediate or upper secondary vocational school.

Upper level academic secondary schools lead to a matriculation examination, upper level technical and vocational schools, and the training colleges lead to the matriculation examination and diploma certificate, which entitles the holder to university studies.

The principles of the organization of school time are the same as in compulsory education (see 3).

Classes are coeducational and generally made up of pupils of the same age group. There is usually no ability grouping in the upper level of

secondary education with the exception of pre-vocational or part-time compulsory vocational schools.

4A Pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule – PTS*)

Approximately 20 percent of young people in Austria decide to attend a pre-vocational school in the last year of compulsory education. The pre-vocational school is used primarily as a ninth school year by the 14- to 15-year-old age group wishing to learn an occupation immediately upon completion of compulsory schooling. On the basis of pupils' interests, inclinations, talents and abilities, the pre-vocational school provides them with the highest possible qualifications for the transition to vocational training in the dual system or further studies.

By providing a wide selection of practically oriented teaching and learning methods distinctly directed towards applications in the compulsory general education subjects and fields, the PTS promotes the acquisition of abilities, skills and knowledge and encourages the individual's talents and motivation to learn.

Pupils receive targeted guidance and preparation for the vocational training that follows through on-site visits and practical training days in training workshops, vocational schools and firms.

Pupils receive basic vocational training organised by vocational field (compulsory elective fields) corresponding to the major branches of business.

Each pupil must elect a vocational field from the ones offered by the school. The compulsory subject areas of German, English and mathematics are taught in courses that reflect the pupils' differing abilities and interests. All pupils in pre-vocational school must learn to use computers for practical everyday and vocational purposes.

Statistics

Pre-vocational school	
Pupils	20,626
Teachers	2,291
Schools	290
Pupil/teacher ratio	9
Pupil/class ratio	23.1

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian Central Statistical Office (ed.), *Austrian School Statistics 2001/02*, Vienna 2002.

4B Academic secondary school – upper level (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule, AHS – Oberstufe*)

It is the task of the upper level of AHS to give pupils a comprehensive and in-depth general education and to prepare them for university studies.

4B.1 Organization

The upper level comprises four years (9 to 12) for 14- to 18-year-olds, and builds on the four years (5 to 8) of the lower level. General information on the academic secondary school is in section 3B.2.

The upper level comprises the same three types as years 3 and 4 at the lower level: *Gymnasium*, *Realgymnasium* and *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*, but they are characterised as follows:

- *Gymnasium*: in addition to Latin, pupils from the 5th year onwards learn either a second modern foreign language or Greek;
- *Realgymnasium*: more mathematics from the 5th year onwards, as well as Latin or a second modern foreign language; also geometry or more biology and environmental education, chemistry and physics;
- *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*: from the 5th year onwards, a second modern foreign language or Latin; also home economics and nutrition, more geography and economics, biology and environmental education, psychology and philosophy.

In addition to the eight-year type of upper-level type of academic school, there is the *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*, which is a separate type of upper level academic school (years 9 – 12; entered on completion of eight years of general education). Pupils learn a second modern foreign language or Latin from the 5th year onwards. They may choose between three orientations: musical instrument playing, design and crafts, or more biology and environmental science, chemistry and physics. This type of school has made the upper level of secondary education accessible to pupils from regions where other upper secondary schools do not exist (in particular for general secondary school leavers).

4B.2 Curriculum

The common curriculum covers most of the compulsory subjects in the curriculum for the lower level.

In all three types, as well as in the *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*, elective compulsory subjects amounting to 6 weekly lessons (*Gymnasium*, *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*), 8 weekly lessons (*Realgymnasium*) and 10 weekly lessons (*Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*) must be chosen in years 6 to 8. Computer science is taught as a compulsory subject (two weekly lessons) in the fifth year of all types.

4B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

The general rules for assessment procedures, marking and reports are described under 'General Provisions' in 3A.3.

Academic secondary school ends with a matriculation examination (*Matura*). Students who have passed this examination and obtained the matriculation examination certificate (*Reifeprüfungszeugnis*) are called '*Maturanten*' (upper secondary school leavers). The matriculation examination certificate provides access to university studies. All candidates who have completed the last year successfully are entitled to sit the matriculation examination at the main examination date. It is also possible to do so with just one 'insufficient' rating.

As of the school year 1992/93, the matriculation examination was reformed. The new leaving examination at academic secondary schools now comprises two equivalent *Matura* options:

- seven examinations (some written, some oral) in at least four different subject areas; or
- the submission of a paper on a specialised field of study (*Fachbereichsarbeit*), instead of one of the written examinations, which must be finished during the first semester of the 8th year.

4B.4 Teachers

See 3B.2

4C Vocational schools (*Berufsbildende Schulen*)

Intermediate secondary technical and vocational schools (*Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen*) (BMS)

Intermediate secondary technical and vocational schools provide not only a thorough general education but also practical vocational training for specific occupations. Intermediate secondary vocational schools are full-time schools (except for the colleges for working adults).

To attend an intermediate secondary vocational school lasting at least three years, applicants must have successfully completed the eighth school year (with the exception of applicants in the third achievement group in general secondary school, who must sit an admissions examination in the corresponding compulsory subject areas). Successful graduates of the ninth year in a pre-vocational school do not require the admissions examination to attend an intermediate secondary vocational school.

Depending on the sector they cover, these schools have courses lasting from one to four years. If an intermediate secondary vocational school is unable to accept all applicants, the school may itself set stricter requirements with a view to ordering candidates. This is usually done on the basis of the pupils' performance in school reports from Year 8. Courses focus on practical training in school workshops, laboratories, kitchens and practice enterprises. Pupils must take part in compulsory practical training in companies or enterprises during their summer holidays.

The conditions for moving to the next year are laid down by law.

After completing at least three years at a vocational intermediate secondary school, pupils may gain a general higher education

entrance qualification by taking the vocational matriculation examination, which comprises four sections: Mathematics, German, Modern Languages and an in-depth examination on the vocational training selected at the vocational intermediate secondary school. The vocational matriculation examination is for external students; no school attendance is required.

Pupils successfully completing at least three years at an intermediate secondary technical or vocational school have access to the regulated trades after fulfilling the general requirements.

Intermediate secondary technical and vocational schools cover the following major sectors:

- agriculture and forestry;
- industry and trade (combination of training in commerce and tourism);
- commercial (intermediate commercial schools);
- vocational schools in the industrial, technical, arts and crafts sectors (in the fields of technology, textiles, tourism and arts and crafts)
- schools for social work;
- schools for the nursing professions (governed by the Nursing Act);
- schools for the medico-technical professions (governed by the Nursing Act).

Upper secondary technical and vocational schools (*Berufsbildende höhere Schulen* – BHS)

The requirements for admission to an upper secondary technical and vocational school are the successful conclusion of the eighth year. AHS pupils must be able to present a favourable certificate. General secondary school pupils who have received a mark lower than 'good' in a differentiated compulsory subject area (German, mathematics, modern foreign language) in the second achievement group, or who were in the third achievement group, must sit an admissions examination in the particular subject area.

If an upper secondary vocational school is unable to accept all applicants, it may set its own stricter requirements with a view to ordering candidates. This is usually done on the basis of the pupils' performance in school reports from Year 8.

Intermediate or upper secondary technical institutes with an artistic orientation also require a positive result on an aptitude examination as a further precondition for admission.

Upper secondary technical and vocational schools provide general and vocational education (**double qualification**), and lead both to the exercise of an occupation and to general

university requirements (matriculation and diploma examination). Education is full-time and lasts five years.

According to European Council Directive 95/43/EC from 20 July 1995, education at vocational upper secondary schools and special forms of these schools is equivalent to education leading to a diploma and therefore post-secondary education in other EU Member States.

The curriculum is divided into three equal parts: general education, vocational theory and vocational practice.

Students on most courses at upper secondary technical and vocational schools must take part in compulsory practical training in business and industry during the summer.

A work placement is recommended for courses with no compulsory practical training. Schools will provide support in finding a suitable placement (trainee) post.

Pupils successfully completing upper secondary technical and vocational schools are entitled to practise their own trade after two years of professional experience. They may also have access to the regulated trades.

After these three years of professional experience in their field, those who have completed upper secondary technical colleges and upper secondary schools of agriculture and forestry may be called 'Ingenieur'.

The most important upper secondary technical and vocational schools are:

- upper secondary technical school (branches: mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, electronic engineering, electronic data processing and organization, civil engineering and construction, chemistry, textile engineering, business engineering, information and communication technologies, etc.);
- upper secondary college for fashion and garment technology;
- upper secondary college for tourism;
- upper secondary college for commerce (*Handelsakademie*);
- upper secondary college for industry and trade;
- upper secondary college for agriculture and forestry (branches: agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, fruit farming, forestry, dairy farming, etc.).

Today, around 26% of 16 year olds attend this type of school, whereas some 20% attend an academic secondary school and 40% are in the dual system.

Teachers

Teachers at intermediate or upper secondary technical and vocational schools are subject area specialists. The nature of training courses and admission requirements depend on the subjects to be taught.

The training of teachers of general subjects in intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools is the same as that of academic secondary school teachers (see Section 3).

Teachers of theoretical subjects in higher vocational schools must have professional experience in the relevant area in addition to university training.

Special training is provided for teachers of practical subjects and teachers of theoretical subjects in intermediate vocational schools (e.g. in vocational teacher training schools and teacher training schools).

All teachers are public employees. As regards in-service training, see Section 3.

4D Training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff, Kindergarten teacher

Training colleges

The **Training College for Non-Teaching Supervisory Staff** trains supervisory staff (*Erzieher/in, Sozialpädagoge/-pädagogin*) for day care centres and boarding establishments for children and adolescents, as well as for youth work outside school.

Admission is conditional upon the successful completion of the 8th year and passing an aptitude test. The courses at this college last five years and end with a diploma examination and a professional qualification, entitling the student to study at a university or academy.

A **Kindergarten Teacher Training College** trains kindergarten teachers (*Kindergärtnerin*) or (with an additional examination) kindergarten teachers and nursery trainers (*Kindergärtnerin* and *Hortlerzieherin*). The admission criteria and the prescribed duration of studies for the **Kindergarten Teacher Training College** are identical to those for training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff. Courses again end with a matriculation examination and a professional qualification, entitling the student to enrol in university studies. Two-year colleges are provided for upper secondary school leavers in which the matriculation examination can be

replaced by a vocational matriculation examination or an examination entitling the student to enrol in university studies. The colleges are described in section 6A.

The curriculum for both colleges comprises general education, such as German, a modern foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, music and physical education, and also job-oriented subjects. The theoretical part takes place at the colleges, while the practical part is in normal nursery schools, or in day care centres or boarding establishments respectively. Students practise under the supervision of specially trained nursery school teachers, or non-teaching supervisory staff.

Statistics

Upper level of academic secondary schools and intermediate and higher technical and vocational colleges

	Academic secondary schools – upper level*	Intermediate technical + vocational schools	Higher technical + vocational schools
Pupils	77,788	48,790	123,705
Teachers	not available	not available	not available
Schools	321	447	281
Pupil/teacher ratio	not available	not available	not available
Pupil/class ratio	22.0	22.3	25.0

*) only the upper level (including *Oberstufenrealgymnasien*).

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (ed.), in cooperation with the Austrian National Statistical Office, *Austrian School Statistics 01/02*.

5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

5.1 Organization of the dual system

In addition to training at intermediate and upper secondary technical and vocational schools (see section 4C) a considerable amount of initial vocational training is provided by apprenticeship training schemes ('dual system').

Apprenticeship training has always been characterised by the dual system of training in business and industry, combined with a theoretical course at a compulsory vocational school. Whilst apprenticeship is based on an apprenticeship contract under labour law, apprentices are still considered to be in compulsory education because they must enrol in a part-time vocational school.

Approximately 40% of all young people aged 15 to 19 are prepared for their future occupation within the dual apprenticeship training scheme.

Around 40,000 enterprises and companies take part in the apprenticeship training scheme, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises in the fields of commerce and crafts, trade, and tourism and leisure; they train approximately 80% of all apprentices. Industrial enterprises and firms not affiliated to a chamber also make a significant contribution to the training of young people.

At present, around 250 occupations and trades are covered by the apprenticeship scheme. The most popular with female apprentices are sales, hairdressing and wig-making (stylist), clerical work, cook/hospitality work; male apprentices prefer such occupations as car mechanic, electrician, carpenter, sales assistant and bricklayer.

5.2 Part-time compulsory vocational school (*Berufsschule*)

Part-time vocational schools are compulsory schools that must be attended by all apprentices part-time or in blocks of time. Compulsory vocational schooling begins when the pupil enters into an apprenticeship or training

relationship and lasts until it is completed, i.e. until the successful completion of a final apprenticeship examination. Apprenticeship training and thus part-time compulsory schooling can last two, two-and-a-half, three, three-and-a-half or four years. Most apprenticeships last three years.

The matriculation and diploma examination can be taken in preparatory and extension courses in connection with the final examination. Since 1997, it has also been possible to sit a vocational matriculation examination specially designed for newly qualified apprentices after taking the final examination, leading to a matriculation certificate for general higher education. Higher level qualifications are also offered by schools for foremen and skilled workers (*Werkmeisterschulen, Meisterschulen*) and examinations sat to become a *Meister* (master craftsman) or demonstrate skills (*Befähigungsnachweisprüfungen*) which give access to the exercising of their trades.

Compulsory part-time vocational schools provide basic and specialised education. Their general aim is to promote and complement the apprenticeship training provided in business and industry and to broaden general education. Two specialised theoretical subjects and one practical compulsory subject may be taught in two streams.

In order to be admitted to apprenticeship training, young people must have completed nine years of compulsory education; apprentices are therefore at least 15 years of age. Apprentices attend compulsory vocational school at least one nine-hour day each week throughout the year, or in 'modules' covering at least eight to ten weeks of each school year.

A 'seasonal' vocational school is also available with concentrated lessons during a specific point in the year.

5.3 Financing

The 'dual' in the dual system also describes the financing. The firm finances the practical training part in the firm and public funds finance the vocational school.

The respective provincial school boards bear the costs of equipping vocational schools (machines, equipment and teaching materials). The Federation and each *Land* bear half of the personnel costs. Austrian industry guarantees that individual companies will finance the in-company portion of the apprenticeship training. A study carried out at the beginning of the 1990s revealed that industry spent approximately 430 million Euros for apprenticeship training. Most of the expenditure arose from payment of the wages that apprentices receive for their work from the employer. The amount of apprentices' wages is set by collective contract negotiations.

The State provides additional financial assistance to disadvantaged groups. Amounts are paid to training firms to cover the cost of wages (apprenticeship compensation) for particularly disadvantaged young people.

As the number of apprenticeship positions available has diminished in recent years, firms have been offered financial incentives from public resources to create additional positions.

5.4 Curriculum

The **curriculum** in all vocational schools includes general subjects such as Politics, German and Communication, an occupation-related foreign language and other business studies subjects.

The theoretical and practical subjects specific to individual apprenticeships form the remainder of the subjects to be studied at vocational schools.

In addition, elective subjects such as German and modern languages are offered. An elective subject related to the apprenticeship may also be created for specific apprenticeships.

Physical education is offered as an optional exercise in basic curricula.

Furthermore, special classes may also be offered to pupils wanting to join a higher ability group and pupils who risk being excluded from a higher ability group.

5.5 Assessment/qualifications/guidance

The general regulations for **assessment** procedures, marking and reports are the same as described under 'General Provisions' in 3A.3.

Apprenticeship training ends with an end-of-apprenticeship examination before a board of examiners which, in addition to the chairperson, is made up of legally established stakeholders (social partners). Pupils are awarded a leaving certificate after successful completion of the vocational school course (*Abschlusszeugnis*) and as a result are exempt from the theoretical part of the end-of-apprenticeship examination.

5.6 Teachers/trainers

Teachers of general education, business studies and theoretical subjects must have the matriculation examination certificate and two years of professional experience.

Vocational school teachers teaching practical subjects require a master craftsman's examination as a professional qualification or an equivalent certificate and six years of relevant professional experience.

5.7 Statistics

Part-time compulsory vocational schools 2001/02	
Pupils	132,613
Teachers	4,621
Schools	178
Pupil/teacher ratio	28.7
Pupil/class ratio	23.4

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian National Statistical Office (ed.), *Austrian School Statistics 2001/02*.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION

6A Non-university education alternatives

The area of non-university education alternatives continues to be expanded in Austria. Essentially, the following training alternatives are available at the present time.

- Teacher Training Colleges, Training Colleges for Religious Education Teachers, Technical and Vocational Teacher Training Colleges;
- Colleges for high-level medical-technical professions;
- Specialised post-matriculation colleges for technical and commercial professions;
- Specialised post-matriculation courses in Kindergarten Teacher Training Colleges and training Colleges for Non-Teaching Supervisory Staff.

6A.1 Admission requirements

These training courses target upper secondary school leavers (*Maturanten*) although the special university entrance examination or vocational matriculation examination and (at vocational teaching training colleges) recognised vocational training and experience can also provide access.

6A.2 Fees/financial support for students

There are no tuition fees at training institutes for Austrian nationals, citizens of the European Union or European Economic Area, as well as some other groups. Students in Teacher Training Colleges, Training Colleges for Religious Education Teachers, Technical and Vocational Teacher Training Colleges, Colleges for high-level medical-technical professions; Specialised post-matriculation colleges for technical and commercial professions, Specialised post-matriculation courses in

Kindergarten Teacher Training Colleges and training Colleges for Non-Teaching Supervisory Staff who demonstrate social need and academic success – in Akademien and not Kollegs – can claim financial assistance.

6A.3 Academic year

The academic year lasts from September to the end of June and is divided into two semesters.

6A.4 Courses

Teacher Training Colleges train teachers for primary school, general secondary school, special schools and the pre-vocational schools. Separate teacher training colleges train religious education teachers.

Technical and Vocational Teacher Training Colleges (*Berufspädagogische Akademien*) train vocational school teachers, teachers of word-processing in all types of school and teachers for some fields of instruction in intermediate and upper secondary technical and vocational schools.

Colleges for high-level medical-technical professions provide non-university training in the health professions in three-year courses divided into seven different branches. There are also *Akademien* for midwives.

Secondary school graduates can receive vocational training in the commercial, technical, crafts and tourism sectors in *Kollegs* (four semesters). The *Kollegs* give upper secondary technical and vocational college graduates an opportunity to acquire an additional vocational qualification. *Kollegs* attached to training colleges for kindergarten teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff provide vocational training in four to six semesters. *Kollegs* set general education as a prerequisite and therefore focus on material specific to the profession.

6A.5 Assessment/qualifications

The same general rules apply as in the sector for schools for working people. (See Regular school system, special rules for teaching by the semester).

Training at *Akademien* is based on independent curricula and examination requirements. Training in *Akademien* and *Kollegs* leads to a diploma examination.

Graduates of these tertiary training courses have access to specific vocational qualifications.

6A.6 Teachers

The teaching staff at *Akademien*, *Kollegs* and schools for working people possess the same qualifications profile as teachers in intermediate and upper technical and vocational schools. In addition, teachers in the humanities (teaching science, education science, school law, and the psychology and sociology of teaching) must have a doctorate, whilst teachers in the field of vocational teaching or practical work must be able to demonstrate longstanding relevant experience.

6A.7 Statistics

	Students
Teacher training college	11,395
Training college for religious education teachers	946
Technical and vocational teacher training college	1,497

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian Central Statistical Office (ed.), *Austrian School Statistics 2001/02*, Vienna 2002.

6B Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschulen)

University-level, tertiary education is provided by the following institutions:

- Universities and art colleges;
- Universities of Applied Sciences,
- the university further education centre ('Danube University Krems');
- private universities (after accreditation).

A number of educational institutions also offer university-style courses.

Specific names of individual universities and vocational colleges can be found at <http://www.portal.ac.at>.

6C Universities

Austria has 21 universities of which six are art colleges and three newly opened medical schools. A total of around 300 courses and 650 study options are on offer.

During the 2003 winter semester, 55 university courses were offered at the 'Danube University Krems' university centre for continuing training.

Six private universities have already been accredited since 1999.

6C.1 Admission requirements

To be admitted to a normal course of study, students must have the matriculation examination certificate (*Reifeprüfung*, *Reife- und Diplomprüfung*, *Berufsreifeprüfung*, *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* for the respective course). Students apply to a specific university for a course of study. They then have to enrol for the chosen course each semester. In some cases, they may be required to take supplementary examinations; students who do not meet some of the formal admission requirements for the chosen course of study have to take supplementary examinations either before matriculation (e.g. biology for the study of medicine) or during the first semester of the course. Art colleges require the matriculation examination only for some of their courses.

Admission is subject to an entrance examination in which artistic talent is assessed. Candidates who have not passed the matriculation examination may sit a special university entrance examination, which provides access to university studies (or, in some cases, studies at an art college) in a limited range of subjects. Graduates of vocational training in the form of an apprenticeship can also meet university entrance requirements by taking a specially organised vocational matriculation examination. There are no limitations to access to particular courses in universities in Austria for Austrian nationals, citizens of the European Union or European Economic Area, as well as for members of certain other groups.

6C.2 Fees/financial support for students

General fees for universities and vocational colleges are 363 Euros per semester for students from Austria and other EU and EEC countries and 727 Euros for foreign students from the rest of the world. There are comprehensive rules on exceptions and reimbursements for students from developing countries and from Central and Eastern European reforming countries or for students in mobility programmes. Support for students comes in the form of direct and indirect support measures, which are largely funded by public resources. Indirect benefits are not means tested and, from a financial point of view, are by far the main focus of government measures. Indirect support includes family benefits, inclusion in the parent's insurance or individual insurance, statutory accident insurance and tax advantages for children in education.

Direct support, guaranteed in accordance with Studies Promotion Act (*Studienförderungsgesetz*), depends on the social need and academic success of the students. The student's income and/or that of those obliged to pay maintenance is used to determine social need. In this context, there are also special support measures such as the study subsidy (to pay for the fees), travel allowance and assistance for foreign students amongst others.

Universities also receive funding from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to use for performance-related grants and research grants for particularly successful students.

6C.3 Academic year

The academic year begins on 1 October and ends on 30 September of the following year and is made up of a winter semester, a summer semester and a period of time without classes. Detailed regulations can be consulted in the Senates of the individual universities.

6C.4 Courses

University courses, which are primarily aimed at providing an academic education to young people in conjunction with career preparation, previously on two levels, lead to an academic degree. Consequently, a distinction can be drawn between first degree studies, doctoral studies, additional and supplementary study courses (*Erweiterungs- und Aufbaustudien*).

Medicine, dentistry and teacher training courses may now be offered as degree courses with two levels. Since 1999, it has been possible to change degree courses into three level studies (Bakkalaureat, Magister, degree). In the medium term, degree studies should generally be replaced by Bakkalaureat and Magister studies. (In 2002, there are already 106 Bakkalaureat courses and 123 Magister courses.)

The university has almost full responsibility for study law under the Universities Act 2002. They need to decide on the courses they offer, respecting European directives where such EU legislation exists. The change from hours per semester to a points system using the European Credit Transfer System is opening up better possibilities for national and international mobility for students.

Teaching staff in universities and vocational colleges are free to decide on the form and content of their classes due to the constitutionally enshrined principle of freedom of science and its teaching. On the whole, the forms of teaching on offer have not changed in the last decade. In addition to lectures, there are seminars, proseminars, exercises, forms of practical training, excursions, tutorials run by postgraduates and so forth. Express permission has been given for distance learning units to be introduced into a course of studies. At art colleges, the artistic development of individual students is nurtured via one-to-one lessons.

6C.5 Assessment/qualifications

The individual responsible for running the class decides on whether participation in the class has been successful, with the exception of lectures. Both at universities and art colleges, diploma examinations have to be sat for each phase of study; Bakkalaureat and Magister examinations have to be taken for Bakkalaureat and Magister courses. The outgoing Universities Act (UniStG 1997) provided for three forms: oral, cross-subject examinations, specific subject examinations and class tests for part subjects.

Under the Universities Act of 2002, the responsible collegial body should set the rules governing tests in the individual curricula. There are no longer any regulations specifying the method used or the purpose of examinations, or indeed the way in which they are to be administered. As such, universities have far greater freedom in deciding on the form of examinations.

In addition to the Bakkalaureat, degree and Magister examinations, at least two pieces of class coursework (for the Bakkalaureat), a dissertation (for the degree course) or a thesis (for the Magister) have to be submitted.

For a doctorate, the main demonstration of academic achievement is the candidate's dissertation, and the course ends with an oral examination.

Degree studies comprise the requirements of both Bakkalaureat and Magister studies. If needed for a vocational qualification and meeting the requirements of the European Union's guidelines on the recognition of university diplomas, Bakkalaureats and degree studies may overlap. The broadening and deepening scientific knowledge by writing a degree dissertation is now part of the Magister course. In the medium term, degree courses are to be replaced by Bakkalaureat and Magister courses.

Studies last from six to 12 semesters (three to six academic years). Doctorates take at least an additional four semesters. In practice, studies generally take longer than this: 6.6% of university students and 22.7% of students at art college complete their studies in the minimum time.

In principle, students do not automatically receive a professional qualification upon completing their studies. If a statutory, regulated professional qualification is needed for an academic career – with the exception of veterinary medicine – postgraduate training must be undertaken (e.g. doctor, university lecturer, judge, etc.). Under the Universities Act of 2002,

degree programmes (i.e. degree courses, Bakkalaureats, Magister and doctorate courses) are preparatory training for careers in the sciences and the arts as well as for training to work in a professional capacity that requires knowledge of science and the arts.

6C.6 Teachers

There is no initial training programme specifically designed for teachers in higher education, who 'train' by exercising their profession. Proof has to be provided to the relevant administration.

The university is under a legal obligation to provide continuing vocational training. University employees working in the sciences and arts must have suitable training for the post in which they are to work. Through an amendment to the 2001 act on government employees in universities, new university lecturers will no longer be employed as civil servants and new contracts have been introduced under the Civil Servant Act. On the date the Universities Act 2002 comes into force, the civil servant contracts will be converted into employee contracts. From this time, new university staff will be employed on the basis of the Employee Act.

In future, when the Rector's Office awards a teaching licence (*venia docendi*), this will neither signal the beginning of an employment contract with the university, nor change an existing one.

University professors work full or part-time on fixed-term or unlimited contracts with the university and have civil servant status. They are appointed by the rector following an appointment procedure. A teaching licence (*venia docendi*) is awarded after the employment contract has been signed.

6D Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)

Since the 1994/95 academic year, Universities of Applied Sciences have provided an alternative to existing university studies in Austria based on the Federal law of 1993 on Universities of Applied Sciences (FHStG). They offer university-level vocational training with a scientific basis and practical slant.

Funding is received both from the State and the private sector and depends on the number of

places on offer. In the winter semester 2001/02, there were 14,338 students taking courses at Universities of Applied Sciences.

6D.1 Access to university education

Access is not limited to people who have a higher education entrance qualification; Universities of Applied Sciences are particularly open to also including people who have succeeded in obtaining vocational qualifications. Nevertheless, these applicants need to take additional training before beginning their studies.

Courses at Universities of Applied Sciences welcome anyone that meets the registration requirements provided there are sufficient places on the course. Students are selected by means of entrance examinations.

6D.2 Fees/financial support for students

See Chapter 6B 1.2

6D.3 The academic year

In principle, the academic year is the same for all universities, though the details are decided by the individual University of Applied Sciences.

6D.4 Courses on offer

For the academic year 2002/2003, 124 courses at Universities of Applied Sciences were on offer across Austria, mainly in the areas of technology and economics but also in the humanistic studies. Several courses cover more than one discipline, and there are also a small number of courses in administration, agriculture and forestry. 37 courses are organised as in-service training. Extra courses were added in the academic year 2002/03, mainly focusing on social work and health.

The statutory minimum course duration for the completion of a course is a total of six semesters for the *Bakkalaureat*, including the work placement, following the introduction of the

three level course in 2002; the corresponding Magister course takes from two to four semesters. The degree course, which may still be taken at vocational colleges, is limited to eight to 10 semesters and also ends with a work placement.

The time spent on studies is determined using ECTS points. Distance learning elements are also being introduced.

Courses at Universities of Applied Sciences end with an academic degree. For Bakkalaurea/Bakkalaureus, Magistra/Magister or Diplom academic degrees, the area of work is added to the degree as well as the suffix (FH). Graduates may opt to follow a doctorate course at a university

6D5 Assessment/qualifications

There is no central administration for the examination system; each course has its own rules on exams. A course ends with a degree examination comprising a dissertation and cross-subject oral examination. For Bakkalaureat courses at Universities of Applied Sciences the final examination comprises individual written assignments done as classwork and a cross-subject oral examination.

6D. 6 Teaching staff

Teaching is done and applied research and development work performed by academic teaching staff. When an application is made for the recognition of a course, at least four people must be responsible for developing the course, and two of these must be academics with a university lecturer or equivalent qualification. If recognition is granted, at least four of the people on the team responsible developing the course must teach it. These four people must include two academics who are university lecturers or have an equivalent qualification and two more who can provide evidence of having worked in a related field.

6E Statistics

University statistics

(Winter semester 2002, graduates; academic year 2001/02)

	degree students	first-year degree students	graduates
Universities	179,966	24,811	16,060
incl.: foreigners	26,924	5,291	1,621
Art colleges	7,593	803	746
incl.: foreigners	3,031	491	229
TOTAL	186,365	25,614	16,806
incl.: foreigners	29,822	5,782	1,850

Total: Students studying at more than one university or art college are only counted once.

Universities of Applied Sciences; data; (Winter semester 2002)

Subject area	New students	Students
Technology	3,348	9,394
Economics	2,091	6,170
Tourism	274	771
Humanistic studies	665	1,074
Total	6,378	17,409

Source: *Statistisches Taschenbuch*, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Vienna 2002.

7. ADULT EDUCATION

7.1. Legal framework ⁽²⁾

Adult education in Austria is not governed by the State under the constitution, but is rather the responsibility of the *Länder* and municipalities. Each *Land* has its own way of fulfilling this responsibility (making resources available, organization, etc.). Due to the constitutional situation mentioned above, the national Adult Education Promotion Act (*EB-FG*) is, so to speak, a voluntary commitment on the part of the national government which does not affect the right of the *Länder* to take decisions. Under the *EB-FG*, financial support must be provided, but the law does not specify the level of support. Financial resources are available in almost all *Länder* to support individuals taking part in adult education, and these are provided in the form of subsidies for course fees. By contrast, the responsibility for adult education with regard to *schools and universities* (for example schools for working people, university courses and vocational colleges for working people) clearly lies with the Ministry of Education and is subject to the statutory regulations applying to this area. There are special forms of both academic secondary schools (*AHS*) and vocational middle and secondary schools (*BMHS*) catering for workers (*SchOG*, *SchUG-B*). The Universities Act 2002 gives universities considerable autonomy with regard to adult education. The legal basis for training related to labour market policy is provided by the Labour Market Service Act (*Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz*) and the Labour Market Promotion Act (*Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz*). The Labour Market Administration (*Arbeitsmarktverwaltung – AMV*) is set up as public service provider.

⁽²⁾ An overview of the role of the State and the *Länder* in education in general is given in Chapter 1.3. As such, in what follows only the major differences found in adult education are described.

7.2 Organizational framework

The national government's responsibilities for adult education are split between a number of ministries. General adult education, school for working people, and adult education at universities or vocational colleges are the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (*BMBWK*), provided that these areas do not fall within a domain of university autonomy. General adult education is mainly dealt with in the *BMBWK* by a department in Section V (teacher and educator training, general teaching opportunities, adult education, training advice), which organizes and coordinates funding and cooperation with associations and institutions working in adult education. The *Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang* answers to the *BMBWK* and deals with the training and continuing training of adult educators and librarians. Responsibility for in-company training and continuing training and labour-market-related training from the Labour Market Service (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich – AMS*) lies with the Ministry of Economics and Labour (*BMWA*). The Federal Ministry for Public Health, Generations and Consumer Protection (*Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz – BMSG*) is responsible for older and disabled people, the Ministry of Health and Women (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen – BMGF*) for training and continuing training for healthcare professionals, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft – BMLFUW*) for agriculture and forestry. The Federal Ministry of Finance (*Bundesministerium für Finanzen – BMF*) is responsible for matters to do with taxation.

Länder and municipalities meet their responsibilities for adult education in a number of different ways, ranging from making resources available to adult education establishments or their umbrella organizations, to departments in the provincial administrations, some of which also deal with other training issues (e.g. vocational college courses). In general, in addition to public bodies belonging to the State, *Länder* and municipalities, interest

groups and religious denominations also show a firm commitment to adult education, actively helping to shape the landscape of adult education via their educational establishments or (umbrella) organizations. Accordingly, representatives of interest groups are actively involved in AMS administration at the national, *Land* and regional levels. As the competent institution, the AMS itself does not provide training, it merely finances it. The Labour Market Service (AMS) is structured in national, *Land* and regional organizations. The social partners are also involved in developing political measures concerning adult education, have connections with adult education establishments (see section 7.5.1) and offer subject-related support for training (training vouchers, grants, etc.).

7.3. Funding

Public expenditure on general adult education and vocational training for adults is considerable and rising. There was a nominal increase in spending by the national government and *Länder* between 1995 and 1999, from around 214 million Euros to over 281 million Euros, with more than 50% of spending allocated to schools for working people. The *direct* continuing training costs incurred by commercial companies, totalling an estimated 520 million Euros, can serve as a comparison. In addition to the public expenditure mentioned, in recent years there have also been 'standardisation costs' for vocational college courses for working people (around 37 million Euros in 2003/04). Tax breaks in the form of rebates and options for offsetting items against tax also increasingly have to be added to public expenditure on adult education. Whilst traditional subsidies are being cut – to emphasize means testing – new forms of funding, such as project funding and individual support from the national government, *Länder* and municipalities are being increased.

The *Werkmeisterschule* (foreman school) is unusual in terms of adult schooling⁽³⁾. As with all continuing vocational training, the main source of funding for these schools run by non-profit organizations are school fees. Course costs can be paid for by the individual, company, AMS or public body, depending on the type and purpose of training. Individuals pay the majority of course costs not only in general adult education but also in adult vocational training, where they cover roughly 40% of the fees. Estimates from the 1990s put spending by the general public at almost 800 million Euros.

⁽³⁾ See chapter 4C.

The AMS pays for much of adult vocational training and spends more than 350 million Euros per year (2001) on training measures. AMS resources come from mandatory contributions defined by law, which are used by the AMS in accordance with the political targets set.

7.4. Teachers working in adult education

In Austria, teachers working in adult education tend to have had different preparatory training, depending on the type of provider for which they work. For adult education in public schools and universities, general entrance requirements for the teaching profession apply. In both non-profit and commercial adult education, experts from companies or professionals may also work as teachers, and permanent staff are mainly concerned with the establishments' administration. The programmes of all major adult education providers, the Federal Institute for Adult Education (*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung*) and also individual universities and other institutions feature teacher training courses for trainers and associate lecturers.

7.5. Organization

There are two forms of adult education with different aims: the first form involves activities designed to provide a written record of progress in the form of a legally recognised certificate, while the second involves activities geared towards gaining general or specialist knowledge without a final examination leading to a certificate.

The certificate-oriented type is provided in training courses with a syllabus which corresponds to initial education. These are mainly offered by public-sector schools for working people or on preparatory courses for exams taken by external pupils. In 1997, the vocational matriculation examination (*Berufsreifepfprüfung – BRP*) was introduced as another option. Amongst other things, fee-paying preparation courses for the BRP are offered by non-profit adult education institutions (which are sometimes also authorized to hold examinations in individual subjects). University courses are a special case, and the resulting qualifications have no equivalent in the initial education system. International certificates are a

relatively recent development created by companies and professional associations and have been particularly popular in IT and computing.

However, the vast majority of courses and places on offer still involve general adult education and forms of vocational training for adults which do not lead to a certificate.

7.5.1. Continuing training institutes

General adult education and adult vocational training are offered by different institutions in Austria: the main providers are non-profit institutions and special forms of public schools. However, universities and vocational training colleges are also playing an increasingly important role in adult education, due to the rising level of formal education amongst the general public. (For details on this, see below)

In addition, commercial training providers – which are many in number and comprise a wide variety of (mainly small) providers – have recently captured a large share of the market in adult education, especially where *in-company* continuing training is concerned. Furthermore, there are specialist continuing training institutes for teachers (teacher training institutes and academies⁽⁴⁾) and other professional groups (civil servants, professionals, etc.).

Non-profit-making providers

Non-profit-making providers in Austria have traditionally had an important place in general and external continuing vocational training in Austria. Their development and structure reflect the country's politics, religion and associations. The larger providers mentioned below have joined together in the Conference on Adult Education in Austria (*Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildungsanbieter Österreichs – KEBÖ*).

Adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) are the most traditional institution in Austrian adult education and are more than 100 years old. The Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (*Der Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen – VÖV*) with its Educational Work and Research Unit (*Pädagogische Arbeits- und Forschungsstelle – PAF*) is the umbrella association representing nine groups at *Land* level organized into associations with different support structures. All in all there are 293 adult education centres in Austria.

The Catholic Adult Education Forum (*Forum Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung*) comprises more than 60 institutions with various aims: Catholic education, residential centres (*Bildungshäuser*), distance learning courses, specialist educational establishments (e.g. *Katholische Sozialakademie*). Whilst the approximately 1,500 local education authorities target specific regional needs, the emphasis in residential centres is placed on intensive and longer-term courses.

The *Bildungshäuser* are non-school youth and adult education institutions. 17 *Bildungshäuser* belong to the umbrella organization known as the Association of Austrian Residential Centres (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bildungshäuser Österreich*). The purpose of the association is to link the organization of *Bildungshäuser* and represent them to the outside world. Each *Bildungshaus* – whether supported by the national government, church, *Länder* or rural interest groups – bears its own responsibility for designing its programme.

The Federation of Adult Education Associations (*Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke*) acts as a platform for two subassociations, the Association for Austrian Popular Education (*Verband Österreichischer Volksbildungswerke – VÖVBW*) and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Bildungswerke (AEBW)*. It promotes cooperation between the subassociations, coordinates exchanges of ideas and experiences and represents joint education policy interests.

The Austrian Vocational Training Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreich – BFI*) acts as the adult vocational training institute for Chambers of Manual and Non-Manual Workers (*Kammern für Arbeiter und Angestellte*) and the Confederation of Austrian Trade Unions (*Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund*) alongside the *BFI Land* associations. The BFI provides a considerable proportion of labour market integration training on behalf of the AMS. The umbrella association coordinates and looks after *BFI Land* associations and maintains (inter)national contacts with government and non-profit adult education institutions.

The Association of Austrian Trade Union Education and Training Programmes (*Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung – VÖGB*) acts as the institution for Chambers of Labour (*Arbeiterkammern*) and trade unions. The VÖGB's residential centres are responsible for providing training and continuing training for officials, employees and members of workers' organizations.

Economic Promotion Institutes (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich – WIFI*) are service centres run by Chambers of Commerce and can be found in

⁽⁴⁾ Cf. corresponding chapter above

all *Länder*. WIFI is the biggest provider of continuing vocational training in Austria. Training activities are designed for target groups at all levels in companies (from unskilled workers to entrepreneurs). At national level, WIFI coordinates tasks with institutions in the *Länder*.

The umbrella organization called the Austrian Economics Society (*Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich – VG-Ö*) and the associated economics societies in the *Länder* are the educational institutions concerned with economics. Here, the preferred target group comprises management staff and employees working in the fields of economics and administration, as well as teachers.

The Institute for Further Education in Rural Areas (*Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut – LFI*) is a rural adult education institution that is active throughout Austria. The LFI's main area of work is adult vocational training in agriculture and forestry and also rural home economics. Training is provided to help people overcome the economic and cultural changes underway in rural areas.

Austria's public libraries (*Öffentliche Büchereien Österreichs*) are, in a broader sense, also fundamental institutes for adult education, for they have works on science, art, literature, politics and also relaxation and leisure; they also offer AV media (CD-ROMs, CDs, videos and cassettes), games and magazines. The *Büchereiverband Österreichs* is the umbrella organization for public libraries in Austria and represents their interests.

Schools for working people ⁽⁵⁾

All school exams taken in upper and lower secondary and also apprenticeship schemes may be taken or completed in adult education. The exams are mainly taken in upper secondary technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen – BHS*) for working people (almost 1,300 certificates per year). These special types of school cover exactly the same specialist areas as day schools, including technical subjects, trade, sales and other domains. The intermediate secondary technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere Schulen – BMS*) for working people have more participants and graduates studying technical subjects and trade (*Werkmeisterschulen* (foreman schools), *Bauhandwerkerschulen* (schools for builders) and *Meisterschulen* (schools for master craftsman) than studying sales-related subjects. Academic secondary schools for working people account for some 400 passes per year. *Kollegs* for working people are also available.

⁽⁵⁾ See chapter 4C

Training institutes and vocational colleges for social occupations (e.g. caring for the elderly) and schools for healthcare and nursing schools with related special training (in line with the Austrian law on nursing (*Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegegesetz*)) are open to adults or may be offered, sometimes in special forms, to adults.

Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences

Universities offer both postgraduate studies for graduates and also university courses for a wider variety of people. The introduction of the Universities Act of 2002 gave Austrian universities considerable autonomy, including with respect to the continuing training options placed on offer there. The Danube University Krems (*Donau-Universität Krems*) only offers continuing training/university courses. It is currently responsible for providing more than a third of further education at university. The *Zentrum für Fernstudien* (Distance Learning Centre) was set up in 1991 at the University of Linz and has its own study centres in Vienna, Linz, Bregenz, Steyr and Saalfelden. The distance learning centre cooperates with the *Fernuniversität Hagen* and is a member of the umbrella association known as the *European Association of Distance Teaching Universities* (EADTU; cooperation with the Open University also takes place in this context).

The sector of Universities of Applied Sciences established in 1994 is also becoming increasingly important in adult education. Around 23% of the students in a year are over 25 years old (compared with 8% at universities), and around a quarter of students at Universities of Applied Sciences are working people (2002/03: 4,360).

Private universities also exist alongside public universities in accordance with the Accreditation Act (1999). Some offer postgraduate courses. Non-university educational establishments – e.g. non-profit adult education institutions – may offer university-level courses based on specific criteria.

7.5.2. Entrance requirements

The entrance requirements for adult education are largely determined by the sector, and more specifically by the qualification to be gained. There are no formal entrance requirements for non-profit adult education when a student is taking specialist continuing training to update their skills. In cases where specialist requirements are needed, advice and

assessments will be offered before the course starts to ensure that can run as smoothly as possible. Entrance requirements for the public school and university sector depend on the type of course or night school involved. *Kollegs* usually have a matriculation examination, whereas secondary schools for working people only require a school leaving certificate.

7.5.3. Objectives of the programmes

In adult education, general education and vocational training have different objectives, though they often overlap. However, adult education almost invariably focuses on training citizens for tasks they perform in their private and social life as well at work. Adult vocational training includes short and long courses and full vocational training for adults is not rare. The training measures funded by the AMS mainly aim for relatively quick re-integration into working life.

7.5.4. Organization in terms of time and space

Adult education in Austria has traditionally taken place in the evening or in blocks at weekends. People very rarely stop working to attend a course. Another special feature of the Austrian adult education culture is that all certificates which can be taken in upper secondary and as part of apprenticeship schemes can also be acquired in adult education at night school or by attending courses. Training courses on offer for working people are generally designed to be part-time. In terms of coverage, Austria is also characterized by the large variety of providers and the wide selection of courses on offer, including regionally.

7.5.5. Curriculum

Most training provided by non-profit or commercial adult education institutions use curricula designed by the institute in question or geared towards international standards (e.g. foreign languages or IT). Company-specific IT certificates are also offered, for example by the Economic Promotion Institute, Vocational

Training Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut*) or adult education centres in specific areas. Schools for working people have the same curricula as standard schools attended by young people aged 14 to around 20. This curriculum also covers issues to do with lifelong learning. Individual subjects in the vocational matriculation examination are also geared towards the curricula for the respective types of school.

7.5.6. Quality assurance

Quality assurance has also been a major issue in adult education in Austria for a number of years, and various approaches have been taken to ensure that it takes place. These range from using general international quality assurance standards and specific criteria and processes for the *Länder* and individual providers, to evaluating courses using participant questionnaires and instructions on self-assessment for trainers and training providers. Many training providers have already undergone quality assurance tests stemming from ISO Standards or the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management). Other associations have developed their own quality assurance measures (e.g. the manual for quality development at Austria's adult education centres). In *Oberösterreich*, a large *Land*, a special quality stamp has been developed which also leads to the partial reimbursement of course fees by the regional government. As such, quality assurance in adult education in Austria has focused on ensuring high-quality input by training providers. Evaluation of the output of adult education is currently being championed primarily by AMS programmes, but may be developed more in other areas in the future. On the whole, due to the growing number of providers and participants, greater emphasis will have to be placed on evaluating the results of courses in the future. There is widespread interest in developing a sustained national strategy for quality assurance in adult education, not least with a view to protecting consumers in the training market.

7.6. Training information and advice

A numbers of institutions in Austria offer and issue training advice for adults, though integrated centres very often provide information for both young people and adults. Training

information and advice for adults is offered by public institutions, the social partners or related adult education institutions and the Labour Market Service (AMS) as well as by the individual *Länder*. The BMBWK has developed a number of IT-based systems and in particular the meta search engine www.eduvista.com – designed to offer anyone interested in training the opportunity to search for competent providers by region and by topic – with a view to improving training information and advice. The 'Bildungsberater im Netz' (training advisors on the Internet) (www.bib-infonet.at) platform initiated by the BMBWK should enable networking and cooperation. In addition to its job placement work, the AMS supports individual initiatives made by job seekers and companies by offering advice on a wide variety of topics and information services connected to training measures and financial support. AMS advisers receive internal training and continuing training. AMS Austria provides a continuing training database on its website www.ams.or.at with comprehensive information on continuing training institutes and their continuing training activities.

7.7. Taking into account prior knowledge, accreditation

The testing and recognition of knowledge acquired by adults has traditionally focused on examinations taken by so-called external students for secondary school certificates or apprenticeships. A major new area has now opened up with the spread of international certificates (e.g. IT/computing, foreign languages, welding technology). Furthermore, the issue of transparency and the recognition of qualifications has now become a central theme in educational policy as a result of European integration and the mobility it brings. The recognition of previously acquired knowledge is best dealt with by the final examination (*Lehrabschlussprüfung*)⁽⁶⁾, vocational matriculation examination (BRP) and special entrance examination (SBP).

⁽⁶⁾ Exceptional admittance to a final examination for candidates who have not completed a course is increasing (already more than 5,300 in 2002). Preparatory courses are mainly funded by the AMS and run by the BFI, WIFI or individual companies.

7.8. Statistics

A survey from 2002 (*Life-Style Studie*) showed that around 40% of over-15s living in Austria have actively taken part in continuing training either in course form or in some other way during the last 12 months (50% are working people). The higher level of formal education is resulting in growing interest in, access to and participation in adult education. 20- to 29-year-olds are the best-represented group in adult education, though among the over-49s has waned. The most popular subjects were found to be computing, job-related subjects, health and languages. In comparison to around a decade ago, participation in adult education has clearly risen.